



In the Rock Floor

MURRAY KEMPTON

United Nations—All the civilized world rejoiced today in our Cuban adventure.

The French, for instance, rejoiced that we now have an Algeria. The British were glad to know we had found a Kenya. Only Mr. Tshombe, a representative of civilization by *grace belgique*, must as Tuesday wore on have felt a certain aesthetic contempt; they do these things more tidily in Katanga.

The debate in the United States followed the lines customary in our debate: 1) it did not exist; 2) what faint quivers there were appear to have been resolved by the reflection that Castro had betrayed the revolution. Ask no more why we do not give B.A.R.s to people attempting to overthrow Trujillo: Trujillo never betrayed a revolution.

We live in the year 1961 and America has made much progress since the 1850s. In the 1850s, Abraham Lincoln damaged his political future and Henry David Thoreau went to jail because they opposed the Mexican War. I do not propose to go to jail over this matter—assuming that the rulers of the earth would condescend to send me—and thus our grandchildren will miss the catch in the throat which would otherwise dampen their eyes at the news that a man I revere had said to me, "What are you doing in jail, uh, Murray" and I firmly and bravely gave reply: "And what are you doing out there, Arthur Schlesinger Jr., and what would your father think if he could see you?"

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Poor Thoreau. He lived in a world before the invention of the Americans for Democratic Action and the syndicated columnist; he was thus pathetically uninformed. But, if Thoreau could stand and say a word for such as Santa Ana, can anyone do less for Castro?

The reports yesterday were not encouraging to those who invoked the ancient, queasy prayer that if it were done when 'tis done then 'twere well it were done quickly. The Latin Americans, none of whom had the loins to speak out for Casals in public, were somewhat derivative toward us liberators

in the corridors. They were as usual wrong; we will, I fear, get the business done, sloppily but on the record.

One thought all day of Adlai Stevenson and of Raul Roa, Castro's foreign minister

There was the feeling that the Administration had handed Stevenson that cup and that he would drink it like the gentleman he is. There was also the feeling that he knew no more than the rest of us precisely what had happened.

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Roa was something else, a free and happy man. "Today," he said, "I am 54 years old. It is the spring. With the revolution, it is always the spring."

It cannot always have been the spring. Roa knows the Cuban revolution. He knows the lies Castro has told himself and through himself the people. But yesterday it was spring again; he was only a Cuban patriot, standing against the alien.

We had a bad day in this rock pool. It left us only with the consolation that no truly great power can ever be called to book for its sins in the UN. But it was a day that belonged to the Poles, the Czechs, and the Romanians—the enslaved given the floor, to cry out at slavery elsewhere.

In all I have to say about this dirty business, I hope that I would speak nothing harsh about those Cubans we sent on this errand. I would not be caught speaking against a soldier lying on his stomach on swampy ground being shot at. Under ordinary circumstances, being no Fidelista, I should wish them well; as it is, I could not wish them ill. There is every excuse for them; but there is no excuse for Allen Dulles or John F. Kennedy. If you think there is, you are, believe me, wrong.